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ABSTRACT

This bulletin presents basic information for parents about identification and services for gifted students in Pennsylvania. Written in a question and answer format, the bulletin addresses the following concerns: the Individualized Education Program (IEP) required for all exceptional students in the state; the multi-disciplinary evaluation process; types of information a parent should provide to the school district; sources of information the school uses for the child's Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER); completion of the CER and approval by all team members; participants at the IEP meeting; components of an IEP; provisions for the child in content areas; approval/disapproval of the IEP by the parent; and required timelines. (DB)

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1

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Bulletin --

IEP Common Talk

Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (since 1953)
Affiliate Chapter of the National Association of Gifted

A Special Pennsylvania Association for Gifted EducationPublication

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What is an IEP?

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a yearly summary documentthat includes all curricular areas in which your child is to receive specialeducation or regular education that is modified to meet his/her individualneeds. Acceleration and enrichment, or both, are used appropriately inspecial and regular education. The Pennsylvania Special Education Standardsrequire an IEP for each exceptional student identified as needing speciallydesigned instruction. It is the framework of a student's program, and shouldconsist of information that is useful in providing classroom instruction.The IEP team will make the decision of whether your child is gifted.

Through routine screening my child has been referred for possible identificationas a gifted student. What will happen?

A Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (MDE) will be conducted by a:

- Person knowledgeable in gifted education

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- Certified School Psychologist
- Person familiar with student's educational background
- Student's Parents
- Regular Education Teacher

A chairperson will be assigned by the district. From this evaluation, aComprehensive Evaluation Report (CER) will be written. Recommendationsas to whether the student is gifted, bases for the recommendations, andrecommendations for the educational program will be included.

What information should a parent provide to the school district?

- Child's academic strengths
- Child's talents and creative abilities
- Evidence of leadership
- Educational activities child pursues outside of school (projects, studies,experiments)
- Expertise that child demonstrates
- Interests of the child
- Special experiences - honors
- Number of repetitions necessary to learn new skills

Involve your child in obtaining this information.

What sources can a school district use to gain information for the CER?

- Diagnostic Tests in the Skill Areas
- Achievement Test Scores
- Interest Inventories
- Student Interviews
- Student Records
- Aptitude Tests
- Teacher-made Tests
- Student Outcomes Competencies
- Curriculum Based Assessment
- Teacher Surveys/Checklists
- SAT Scores
- Individual IQ Tests
- Student Performances
- Student Portfolios
- Rate of Acquisition and Retention*
- Classroom Observation

* The relative ease with which a student learns new information or acquiresappropriate skills, and the ability of a student to retain and use informationor skills in meaningful

ways.

What happens after the CER is completed?

A typed final summary is sent to you. Each team member signs the report,indicating agreement or disagreement. The IEP meeting is scheduled within10 school days after the CER Report is sent. The same process applies toreevaluation which must occur every two years or more often, if necessary.

Who should be present at an IEP meeting?

There must be a minimum of two persons from the district at the meeting.An administrator serves as the chairperson of the meeting. Since you areyour child's spokesperson, you need to attend this meeting. Your childmay also be included in the meeting. You may invite anyone you choose toattend with you. You may request the presence of a specific staff member.

What are the components of an IEP?

- **Present Education Level**
  Derived from the CER Report. It establishes the extent of gifted potential,academic functioning levels, the child's rates of acquisition/retention,and performance levels. Example:~

  Strengths: Iowa Test of Basic Skills Concepts -

- **Annual Goals**
  Based on the child's strengths, abilities and learning needs. Theyare the placement and provisions for the child's instructional program.Example:

  "Daniel's mathematical skills will be strengthened, incre

- **Short Term Instructional Objectives**
  Actions and activities that will help your child reach the annual goals,and evaluation criteria to determine when the child has achieved the annualgoals. They should include what the student will produce, how he/she willapply the skills, or what real outcome will result as a result of theirengaging in a study, test, or activity. Example:

  "Daniel will receive instruction in Algebra. He will be

- **Specially Designed Instruction**
  The results of the CER will help determine what general education curriculum,instruction, instructional environment, methods, and materials that gobeyond the services and programs that the student would receive as partof general education. Specially designed instruction can be in regularand special education.

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- **Related Services**
  Transportation, assistive devices, or any medical assistance. If theprovision of the IEP in regard to program or services has to take placein another building or place, transportation is provided.

- **Instructional Group**
  Gifted Support in regular and special education.

- **Level of Intervention**
  The type of intervention your child needs-special education, regulareducation, modified regular education, or any combination. It is to beat the level which your child will perform successfully.

- **Location of Intervention**
  School district or another location where services will be provided.

- **Inclusion in Regular Education**
  Percentage of time in regular education.

- **Date When Services and Programs Begin**
  When child receives services.

- **Anticipated Duration**
  Based on one year, but can be reviewed at any time.

- **Exit Criteria**
  Determine when child no longer needs special education. This usuallymeans when a gifted student has met the criteria for graduation.

What provisions for my child can be met in content areas (e.g. science,social studies, literature)?

- Acceleration by "skipping" the normal course
- A special course that is different in any of the following ways:
  - A different curriculum
  - More advanced texts than the basic course
  - Different instructional techniques that are describably different thanthose of the regular course
  - Different testing procedures that require higher level thinking ratherthan recall or memory only

Do I have to sign the IEP?

Your signature signifies that you were present at the meeting.

The NORA (Notice of Recommended Assignment) indicates if you agree ordisagree with your child's program. If you feel that the IEP does not meetthe needs of your child, then, within 5 days of the IEP meeting, you mustsign the NORA as *disapproved with request for an additional meetingor disapproved with a request for an impartial due process hearing.*

Are there timelines that the district must follow?

- The IEP shall be developed within 30 calendar days of the CER or Re evaluationReport.
- IEP implementation must be no later than 10 school days from the meeting.
- IEP meetings are at least yearly and more frequent if needed. Any IEP teammember can reconvene an IEP meeting at any time.

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[HOME] Returnto PAGE Main Page